

CHAPTER 03



Reflecting their expeditionary character, task-organized Marine Air-Ground Task Forces operate around the world, providing a vital U.S. presence and combat capability. They participate in a wide range of operations, projecting U.S. power and influence from secure sea bases. Relying upon a combination of amphibious lift,

CURRENT OPERATIONS

Maritime Prepositioning Ships, and airlift, they possess unmatched strategic mobility, providing joint force commanders with a full spectrum of capabilities wherever and whenever needed. They are drawn from both Active and Reserve forces, demonstrating the responsiveness of the entire Marine Corps Total Force.

This chapter examines Marine Corps operations, training, and lessons learned. In doing so, it highlights the service's global, expeditionary reach, as well as the sheer magnitude of the Corps' contribution to America's security.



Operations

In 2002, the Marine Corps continued to play a key role in the global war on terrorism. Marines operated in diverse locations, from Afghanistan, to the Arabian Gulf, to the Horn of Africa and the Philippines. At the same time, the Corps maintained a host of other forward presence and exercise commitments around the world, in the process supporting U.S. national security, military, and foreign engagement strategies.

Marine Corps efforts throughout the year highlighted the versatility and adaptability of MAGTF operations. Missions in support of Operations Enduring Freedom (OEF) and Noble Eagle marked the most visible accomplishments of our forward-deployed forces. Early in 2002, Task Force 58 (TF 58) completed its mission in Afghanistan, and relinquished operational control to the follow-on forces of the Army's 101st Airborne Division. The Marines of Task Force 58 reembarked aboard amphibious shipping and completed their MEU(SOC) deployments. Since then, Marine Air Control Squadrons have continued to provide air control and

surveillance support to OEF during their deployments to the Central Command area of operational responsibility.

Elsewhere, the Marine Corps continued to support Operation Joint Forge in the Balkans by sending Civil Affairs teams to Bosnia. Our KC-130 Hercules fleet augmented the Air Force's global combat search-and-rescue refueling mission by deploying detachments to Turkey and Iceland. Marine Corps F/A-18 Hornet squadrons operated from land bases in Saudi Arabia and aircraft carriers in the Arabian Gulf in support of Operation Southern Watch. Additionally, our Prowler squadrons continued to deploy to Japan, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia in support of worldwide EA-6B operational requirements. Marine Expeditionary Units from the east and west coasts, as well as the 31st MEU from Okinawa, demonstrated the continuing importance of the MEU in key areas overseas, maintaining a vital U.S. presence and participating in numerous operations and exercises with our allies.



Lessons Learned from Operation Enduring Freedom

Marine Corps participation in Operation Enduring Freedom in 2001 and 2002 confirmed our value as a key component of America's joint forces team. MAGTFs integrated their efforts with those of the Navy, Special Operations Forces, the Army, and the Air Force in many areas, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance; long-range strike; close air support; and ground combat. The Marine Corps also demonstrated that the Marine Expeditionary Brigade — a flexible, medium-weight, combined-arms, expeditionary force — is not only responsive, but also a full and effective partner in joint and coalition operations.

In Enduring Freedom, Marine forces displayed their longstanding expeditionary competency and tactical flexibility. This was never more evident than when the forward-deployed Marines of the 15th and 26th Marine Expeditionary Units — two organizations, belonging to different commands, and based and trained on separate coasts — were rapidly integrated into one expeditionary brigade-sized MAGTF to expand the capabilities and options of the on-scene, joint force commander. The flexibility they brought to the conflict and their ability to rapidly adjust to the changing nature of the war reflects well on Marine training and education programs.



Nevertheless, Operation Enduring Freedom holds some important lessons for Marine Corps and joint planners as we proceed with the next stages of the global war on terrorism. For example, conditions during OEF necessitated our reliance upon

- >> Long-range communications and networking
- >> The cooperation of — and coordination with — joint, SOF, and coalition forces
- >> Aviation fire support, delivered by a range of coalition aircraft and involving the extensive use of precision-guided munitions;
- >> Sea-based operations
- >> Strategic, operational, and tactical airlift
- >> Detailed logistical planning
- >> Flexible organizations.

Our experience in Afghanistan and elsewhere holds potential implications for future Marine Corps operations. The more salient lessons from Operation Enduring Freedom follow, along with examples of current or planned programs that help address each of these lessons.

Operations in the global war on terrorism may require greater reliance on Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare.

The unique characteristics of the conflict in Afghanistan did not stress all the capabilities provided by credible, forward-deployed expeditionary forces, but they did underscore the general validity of the Marine Corps' capstone concept, Expeditionary Maneuver Warfare. OEF demonstrated the relevant, decisive operational value that Marine units can provide to joint force commanders. The operation showcased the power and versatility that naval expeditionary

forces bring to the fight by virtue of their strategic agility, operational reach, tactical flexibility, and support and sustainment capabilities.

Operations in the global war on terrorism may require an even greater degree of the strategic agility, operational reach, and tactical flexibility. During Operation Enduring Freedom, the Marine Corps' proven operational reach and tactical flexibility were nevertheless constrained by a lack of available communication bandwidth, a paucity of interoperable and fused joint and combined intelligence systems, and limited transportation capabilities. For instance, bandwidth limits reduced MAGTF access to

information gathered by unmanned aerial vehicles and the participation by our mobile command-and-control suites ashore in higher-level intelligence sharing. The Marine Corps is currently pursuing improvements in these areas by funding programs — such as the Joint Network

Management System, Global Broadcast Service Terminals, Intelligence Broadcast Receivers, CAC2S and the UOC — that will improve connectivity and flow of information both within the MAGTF and between the MAGTF and the rest of the joint force. Likewise, the Dragon Eye, part of the Small Unit Remote Scouting System, may reduce MAGTF reliance on external reconnaissance.

Operations in the global war on terrorism may require the identification and intercept of dispersed small groups or individual enemies, which in turn will lead to widely dispersed, austere bases and maneuvering forces. With no large formations of conventional forces and few large weapons systems such as tanks or aircraft, al-Qaeda fighters posed daunting challenges to joint target planners in the application of traditional military force. The decentralized, compartmented structure of al-Qaeda often makes its forces difficult to locate and engage. This increases the importance of ground forces in locating and identifying targets before they are engaged, and in interdicting these small, dispersed groups of adversaries. These kinds of activities impose a larger degree of dispersion upon our own forces. Dispersed operations by maneuver, aviation, and service support units generate combat-identification,



force-protection, mobility, logistical, and command-and-control challenges. Current procurement programs that will improve the ability of Marines to operate against scattered terrorist organizations include the Modular Weapons System, the Tactical Handheld Radio, Tactical Remote Sensor Systems, the Thermal Weapons Sight, the High Mobility Multipurpose Wheeled Vehicle A2, and the Small Unit Riverine Craft.

Operations in the global war on terrorism may require levels of operational reach and tactical flexibility that are now constrained by bulk liquid transportation requirements. In Afghanistan, a primary limiting factor in supporting operations ashore was bulk liquid transport. The large volume of fuel and fresh water required for motorized ground forces, even as limited as those of TF 58, made any significant operational movement a logistical challenge. Moreover, as the operation advanced deeper into Afghanistan, the growing length of TF 58's supply lines back to supporting land and sea bases made airlift capacity a critical variable that determined operational tempo during each stage in the campaign. The Marine Corps has planned procurements that will improve its ability to manage bulk liquids in austere environments, such as the KC-130J, the Aviation Refueling System, the Extended Boom Forklift, and the Tactical Water Purification System.

Operations in the global war on terrorism may require levels of operational agility and tactical flexibility beyond that provided by the Marine Corps' current, aging equipment. TF 58 operations in Afghanistan succeeded, even though we were operating in a harsh desert environment with some major weapons systems that were beyond their planned service lives. Moreover, in addition to having capabilities that may only be



marginally capable of meeting the demands of emerging operational concepts such as EMW, these older systems also present us with greater maintenance, logistical, and safety challenges. Until the new and transformational programs we are pursuing enter service, the Marine Corps must fund major improvements to older, but still relevant, systems. Programs such as the Light Armored Vehicle Service Life Extension Program; the Assault Amphibious Vehicle Reliability, Availability, Maintainability/Rebuild to Standard (AAV RAM/RS); the M1A1 main battle tank Firepower Enhancement Program; the AV-8B Remanufacture Program; and upgrades to the Three-dimensional Long Range Radars and F/A-18A/C/D aircraft will help ensure that our "veteran" systems possess modern capabilities through the coming decade.

Operations in the global war on terrorism may require tactical operations in areas containing unmarked minefields, unexploded ordnance, and chemical or biological threats. Encountering chemical and biological weapons was a distinct possibility in Afghanistan. The potential presence of these agents was highlighted by Marine participation

in sensitive-site exploitation and the preparations made for chemical or biological attack at the U.S. embassy in Kabul. Mines and unexploded ordnance presented a more conventional but no less troublesome threat. Afghanistan is one of the most heavily mined countries in the world, and Marine ground forces relied heavily on coalition mine detection capabilities. Such hazards make it imperative that the Marine Corps explore emerging technologies to detect, mark, monitor, and neutralize the threat. Current programs such as the Assault Breaching Vehicle will help the service deal with the mine threat. Funding for USMC participation in the Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Joint Warning and Reporting Network and the numerous small programs within the Family of Incident Response Systems will ensure Marine forces meet nuclear, biological and chemical threats with the best technology and training available. This will be true whether we are engaged in homeland defense operations or operating as part of a joint force overseas. Planned funding for the Composite Tracking Network, the CLAWS, MRRS, and upgraded Three-dimensional Long Range Radar Systems will provide expeditionary forces ashore with improved protection from NBC airborne delivery systems.

Operations in the global war on terrorism require that Marine ground units have an increased ability to coordinate precision-guided munition strikes. MAGTFs also need lightweight systems to deliver robust, responsive, digitized ground-based fire support against targets that are unsuitable for precision-guided munition attack, and for those times when air attack is inhibited by overflight, basing rights, or other considerations. Marines operating in Afghanistan sometimes encountered enemy forces in situations unsuited for precision

air attack. In these instances, the only other organic fires available to TF-58 commanders were 81mm and 60mm mortars. A lighter, more mobile and more lethal fire support system would have dramatically improved the task force's organic fire-support capability and lessened their reliance on aviation fire support, which was sometimes degraded by the weather, terrain, dust, and other factors. Even when precision aviation fire support was available and suited for the situation, Marine ground units lacking sufficient communication bandwidth and appropriate terminal-guidance equipment sometimes found it difficult to determine and report target locations with sufficient accuracy. Current planned investment funding in programs such as the Lightweight 155mm Howitzer, the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System and the Target Location, Designation and Hand-off System will ensure future expeditions have a broader range of robust, responsive fire support options available to them.

EXERCISES

Even as the Marine Corps saw one of its busiest years in terms of operational deployments, participation in realistic, worldwide exercises remained critical to ensuring the Marine Corps maintained a ready, relevant, and capable force. In 2002, Marines participated in more than 200 service, joint, and combined exercises. These included live-fire, field training, command post, and computer-assisted exercises. Participants varied in size from small units to Marine Expeditionary Forces.

Overseas, Marine Expeditionary Units (Special Operations Capable) conducted exercises in Jordan, Italy, Croatia, Tunisia, the Republic of the Philippines, Australia, Thailand, and Kuwait. Through joint and

combined exercises, such as Millennium Challenge in the United States, Ulchi Focus Lens in Korea, Infinite Moonlight in Jordan, and Eager Mace in Kuwait, Marines continued to improve their own capabilities and enhanced their interoperability with allied forces.

Additionally, Marines embarked aboard USS *Fort McHenry* (LSD 43) participated in Commander, US Pacific Command's Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training (CARAT) Exercise, engaging in a series of bilateral training exercises in the southeast Asian littoral region. Likewise, Marines from Marine Forces Reserve (MARFORRES) participated in UNITAS during the fall in South America. While these deployments were of a smaller scale than those of our MEU deployments, they, too, contributed to improved cooperation and interoperability between U.S. and foreign forces. The contacts established during these and other combined exercises hold substantial potential benefits for the United States as the nation engages in the global war on terrorism.

At home, the Marine Corps also conducted internal exercises, such as Combined Arms Exercises (CAX) in Twenty-nine Palms, California; Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) courses in Bridgeport, California; Weapons and Tactics Instructor (WTI) courses in Yuma, Arizona; and MEU



(SOC) work-ups. This training helps develop individual and unit proficiency and competency. It also allows the Marine Corps to examine units' operational skills ensuring that they have the capabilities required to execute the full range of MAGTF operations.

COUNTER DRUG OPERATIONS

The Marine Corps continued to contribute to the nation's counter drug effort in 2002, participating in numerous counter drug missions in support of Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6), Joint Interagency Task Force-East (JIATF-E), and Joint Interagency Task Force-West (JIATF-W). These missions were conducted on federal lands along the U.S. southwest border, in several domestic "hot spots" that have been designated as High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas. Individual Marines and units are assigned to these missions in order to provide support to domestic drug-law enforcement throughout the United States. Marines of Marine Forces Reserve executed the vast majority of these missions.

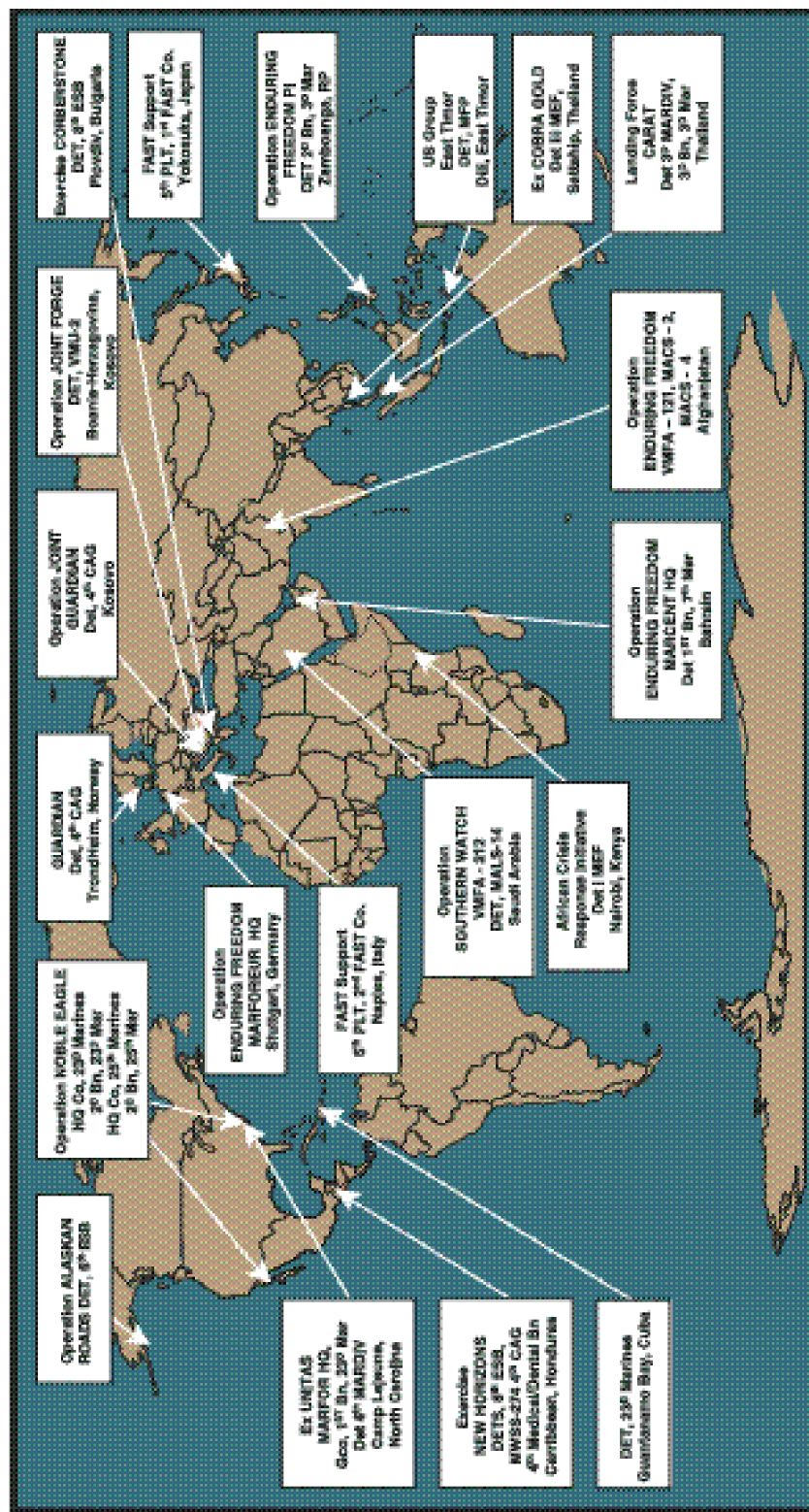




USMC Operations Matrix

DATE	LOCATION	MISSION
Oct 92 - Present	SE Asia	POW/MIA accounting
Jan 92 - Present	SWA	Attack aviation
Sep 99 - 15 Dec 2002	East Timor	Peacekeeping
Nov 00 - Present	Kosovo	Civil affairs support
Jan - May/ Nov-Dec	Turkey	CSAR Refueling & electronic attack
Sep 01 - Present	CONUS/GUAM	Air defense, Contingency response
Dec 01 - Present	Arabian Sea	MSC ship security
Dec 01 - Present	Kabul, Afghanistan	Embassy security
Dec 01 - Present	Guantanamo Bay, Cuba	Security, engineering, and command and control
Jan 02 - Present	CENTCOM AOR	Combat operations
Jan 02 - Present	Zamboanga and Basilan Island	Security and construction support

FORCE	DESCRIPTION OF ACTION
Dets from III MEF	Recovery operations in support of Operation Full Accounting
Squadrons from 2d and 3d MAWs	F/A-18 and EA-6B support to Operation Southern Watch
Elements of III MEF/MEUs	Provide planning support and humanitarian assistance
Dets from 3D and 4TH CAG	Operation Joint Guardian
VMGR 252, 353, 234, & 452 VMAQ-3	CSAR refueling in support of Operation Northern Watch
Elements of 1ST, 2D, 3D and 4th MarDivs; 1st, 3D, And 4th MAWs; CBIRF, VMFA(T)-101	Provide air defense, quick/ready reaction and incident response forces in support of CNORAD, CPAC, Operation Noble Eagle
Elements from FAST, MEUs, and III MEF	Afloat shipboard security to MSC ships operating in the Arabian Gulf in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom
Det 26TH MEU and 4th MEB (AT)	Providing security at the US embassy compound
Elements of 2D FSSG, 2D and 4th MarDivs	Provide security and civil engineering for detainee operations as part of Operation Enduring Freedom
Elements of I, II, and III MEFs	Conduct combat operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom
Elements of 3D MARDIV and 3D FSSG	Provide security and civil engineering Support to JTF-510 and Operation Enduring Freedom-Philippines



Early 2003 Marine Corps Deployments

